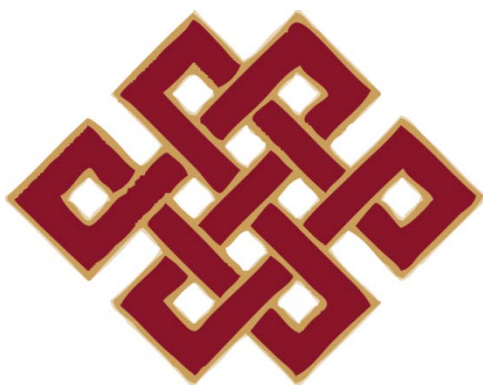


# **PICTURES FROM CATHEDRAL PEAK**

## **Selected Poems**

**DAVID PAUL BOAZ**  
(DECHEN WANGDU)



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(DECHEN WANGDU)

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**For Kathleen Denzel Boaz  
and  
Denzel Deloris Massey**

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## What Does it Matter What Poetry Is?

*What does it matter what poetry is, after all? All that matters is the eternal movement behind it.*

—Dylan Thomas

What is this movement that matters? How may the poem reveal it? Enjoy it? Praise it?

Energy (*prana, lung, ch'i, spiritus, pneuma*) arises from its basal source as light or motion, a flux of continuous change. This ground or basis of motion is changeless Reality Itself. It has many names. None can describe it. It is simply primordial awareness, Consciousness Being Itself, the very sourceground of the eternal mystery of all that is.

So energy arises as light, motion, change, matter, life, mind, breath, voice. This great mystery cannot be grasped by the mind. It is profound. It utterly transcends yet embraces the understanding. Thus, the understanding may touch it. As the great tradition of humanity's Primordial Wisdom Tradition attests, that Being Itself may be experienced directly as it is, prior to thought—concept and belief—by the feeling-emotional nature, at the Heart.

From such a ground the poem arises, with the mind, upon the breath, through the voice, witness to that primordial presence that all that is, arising as our relative spacetime realities, given each moment, each breath, from this primeval source of the great memory of our kind.

*The heart of the soul is where the inner world and the outer world come to meet. At this boundary, it is present at every point.*

—Novalis

Of this great mystery, the arising of light/energy/motion from its supreme source, there arises the Three Mysteries of the existence of Body, Voice and Mind. Voice is AH, the poem arising upon the breath-energy of the mind of the basal primordial awareness itself. Spirit-energy as voice links all beings together. Voice—*vox, vak, vani*—is Sarasvati, goddess mother, wife of Brahma the Creator, mirror and witness to all that arises in this

Interbeing that is Dōgen's Being-Time. Voice is the Hermetic/Orphic/Vedic/Hebrew song of God, divine voice, *Corpus Hermeticum*, OM our body together, animated by breath of all beings in this numinous participation in nondual godhead. This voice sings of the Orphic transcendence of the dualities of the Apollonian and the Dionysian, of being and becoming, of all binaries in their luminous sourceground—*cittadhatu*, Tao—atavistic presence at the Heart (*HUM*). OM AH HUM. "Like that it is."

For Nora Chadwick:

*Everywhere the gift of poetry is inseparable from divine inspiration. Everywhere this inspiration carries with it knowledge... uttered in poetry which is accompanied by music... music is everywhere the medium of communication with spirit.*

As form, our body arises from this perfectly subjective Spirit—*apeiron*, Tao, *shunyata* (emptiness)—Orphic voice as music/poetry reveals the truth of the mysteries: All things participate in That. We are not separate from That. Tat Tvam Ami, That, I Am!

*And if that of the earth betrays you, say to the still earth: I flow. To the rushing water speak: I am.*

—Rilke

For Sakyapa scholar-master Buton:

*The voice of the Buddha arises,  
being called forth by the mind  
of all living beings.*

Voice is mantra, breath of all-embracing Spirit descending and ascending throughout this great *cosmic* mandala, circulation of the light that holds us together in it. Voice is the instant self-liberating *Ah!* of experience. Voice is the shaman-poet-singer dwelling in mythtime at the root of attention, just prior to the world, in naked awareness, sings:



*Everything is alive!  
The trees, grasses, wind dancing,  
guides me. I understand  
the songs of the birds!*

Voice is wind, breath of many voices deep within us. Listen to this wind through the silence as it carries us across the deep night.

In the Tibetan Buddhist *Shambhala* teachings the essential energy that gives rise to these mysteries of Body, Voice and Mind is *Lungta*, the Windhorse. *Lung* (wind/*prana*/energy) may be harnessed and ridden (*ta*/horse) via the wisdom teachings (*sutras* and *tantras*). Thus is the wild horse of the mind tamed. And the result/fruition is *drasbu*, the realization of the numinous outshining prior unity of the apparent dualism of this continuum of arising energy forms. "Form is emptiness, emptiness is form." Upon this breath the voice of the poem arises.

At its heart, the poem, like the many truths appearing through it, is transparent allowing us "to see and keep what the understanding touches intact—as grapes are round and come in bunches" (William Carlos Williams). Thus the poem arises through the still bright mirror of mind, reflecting appearances, witness to the supreme source, abiding always at the heart, prior to the perennial drama of Narcissus, the egoic self-contraction, causal knot that is our thought and physical form. Here, the life in the poem reveals who we are. *Tat Tvam Asi*, That Thou Art. The poem lives us. "One no longer dreams, one is dreamed" (Henri Michaux).

Because the poem springs from the very sourceground that is Being Itself in whom life arises, and because it is given, received and then given again upon the very breath-energy of this Being, it must be life affirming.

*Poetry can do a hundred things... but there is only  
one thing that all poetry must do; it must praise all it  
can for being and for happening.*

—W.H. Auden

The poem reconstitutes the naked immediacy of that "eternal movement" of energy given to sensation, perception and cognition into "news," or pictures, a way of seeing, little truths earthed or anchored in feeling. "Only the heart endures." The natural, innate intelligence of the poem, its form, its grace, its internal gravity exists in relation or tension with the naked image or idea of the thing directly perceived, *samadhi* of the *ding an sich*, the pristine, untainted neumenal thing-in-itself. This priority of image and idea, subject and object, *noumenon* and *phenomenon* is the *relationship* of the poem. Ultimately, it is the dualism of this very relationship that we transcend on the transcendental breeze that is the breath of the poem. The poem points to or intends the great Source, yet this source is not transcendent, but abides at the Heart as the always already present now of every arising form. Thus the poem itself cannot transcend everyday reality, and avoids transcendental logocentric absolutes (God). But it can illuminate the beauty of the natural things—ordinary mind—that is everyday reality. "Leave it as it is and rest your weary mind. All things are perfect exactly as they are" (Shakumuni, the Buddha).

*The trouble with most poetry is that it is either subjective or objective.*

—Basho

The poem prefers the naked natural image or idea of that perceived, to the abstract concept, ideal or sentiment of it. Abstraction betrays the natural direct image or idea.

*Arising, musically, the diaphanous idea itself, the flower missing form all bouquets... To name the object is to delete three-quarters of the enjoyment of the poem... to suggest, to evoke, this is what charms the imagination... the poem is a mystery through which the reader finds his own way.*

—Mallarmè

"My understanding has nothing to do with your understanding, (Hakuin Zenji).

For Wordsworth, the movement of this primordial energy through nature's forms "were all like workings of one mind, the features of the same face, blossoms upon one tree..." For Baudelaire, "nature is a temple where living pillars let secret words escape..." For Blake, "Energy is Eternal Delight."

Because the poem is given to be given again, "a poem on a page is only half a poem." To get the poem off the page it must be voiced, by the poet, or by the reader.

*"Each poem is a performance as well as a script, the performance being both a realization and a criticism of the text."*

—James Scully

The poem in this relation requires an opening to receive what is directly given, before it can be given again in the poem. This opening is prior to expression. This opening is a choice. Grasping, clinging and cognitive or spiritual seeking are not the poem. *Poesis* is process, not substance; receptive, not creative; nondual primordial wisdom (*gnosis, jnana*), not mere dualistic knowledge; openness, not activity; path, not goal. Thus the poem arises as we open, just for a moment to receive, surrender (*wu wei, pistis/faith*) and relax into the presence (*vidya*) of that always present, this primordial awareness ground that is our own original face. Here the poem is purely transparent, luminous and bright beyond the dualism—the binaries of relationship, of subject and object, you and me, spirit and matter. This post-transcendental, postmetaphysical understanding was told by Soto Zen Patriarch Dōgen 800 years ago:

*Midnight. No waves  
no wind. The empty boat  
flooded with moonlight.*

—Dōgen Zenji

Thus the poem is Nemerov's "Protean Encounter", our coming to meet with the shape-shifting formless form of the eternal truths arising from transconceptual, nondual Spirit Itself. It is our primordial awareness wisdom that recognizes this wisdom

presence—by whatever name— deep within each human Heart. All this, without excluding past and future, in the timeless now, through these little pictures that are the poem. These truths transmitted through the poem may be viewed as "what oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed." (Pope). The truth of the poem is, for Keats, a remembrance "of one's own highest thoughts."

*The work of art has always been to demonstrate and celebrate the interconnectedness: not to make everything "one" but to make the "many" authentic, to help illuminate it all."*

—Gary Snyder

Although the world's religions derive from sacred poetry, the poem itself cannot be conventionally or exoterically religious, and offers no consoling message or doctrinaire idea or image of the divine to which we may cling. Such a feelgood poem may serve as an appealing or inspiring sentiment, but cannot transmit the nondual, transconceptual ego-self-transcending truth that is our heart's desire. Yet, it is the esoteric/mystical tradition of the world's religions—religion as *religio*, yoga, union of spirit and matter—that provides the Orphic ideal of sacred, participatory self-transcending art that is the very essence of the poem itself.

*It is the privilege of poetry to preserve us from mistaking our notions either for things or for ourselves. Poetry is the completest mode of utterance.*

—I.A. Richards

Indeed, such art offers a brief antidote to those two great ego-ethnocentric evils of the modern/postmodern age: the separative violent dualism of religious provincialism, and life-denying, spirit-denying massmind Scientific Materialism (Scientism).

*The greatest poetry sings always, at the end, of transcendence; while seeing clearly and saying plainly the wickedness and terror and beauty of the world, it is at the same time humming to itself, so that one overhears rather than hears: All will be well.*

—Howard Nemerov

Yet, in order to suggest this ultimate truth of the ontic prior perfection of arising spacetime reality, poetry must also speak to the *relative truth* of the subtle impermanence of all things of the world, and to the fearful, destructive denial of this, the denial of our own death.

For Soto Zen Patriarch Dōgen Zenji, light energy motion is but an eternal continuum of the moment to moment arising, abiding and passing away—the change—that is being in time.

“Being is time.” For our Great Wisdom Tradition then, being in the world is this temporal continuum of impermanent finite phenomenal reality arising from its infinite, changeless primordial awareness matrix base, our “supreme source”—by whatever name,—that is infinite Being Itself. And arising herein is our diaphanous impermanence that is the very essence of life and therefore of the Beautiful; is the soul of art, and of the poem itself. Thus does the poem reveal and celebrate this unborn, deathless luminous nature of mind, in the brightest and simplest of ways.

There are many ways of conceiving the poem. The history of criticism is full of them. Novalis speaks of the two stages of the self-expression of the poem: “The first stage is introspection; exclusive contemplation of the self. The second stage must be authentic observation outward, spontaneous sober observation of the external world.” These two stages or aspects of the poem are the two faces of self-transcendence: self-observation, inward and upward (meditation/*dhyana*, *zazen*, *gom*), and compassionate ethical conduct, downward and outward (*zenkan*, *gsal rig*, *jyodba*), into the everyday lifeworld of sentient beings. The first stage is inward, non-conceptual contemplation and meditation upon the primordial wisdom presence—by whatever name—that is our actual identity. The second stage is bringing the “heaven” of this

divine nature, into the "earth" of everyday lifeworld compassionate thought, speech and action; realizing and demonstrating the presence of our divine nature while "hewing wood and carrying water." And doing poetry. "What you are is what you have been; what you will be is what you do now" (Shakyamuni Buddha).

In due course, in the poem and in the individual, Narcissus, the self-limiting ego-I, and the selfless *mahatman* that is our actual noself are known to be identical, which was their essential nature from the very beginning. This is the nondual view. "Seeing into one's self-nature is seeing into emptiness (*shunyata*)" (Hui-Neng). "Without past, present, future; empty awake mind" (Mipham Rinpoche).

Initially, the first stage is narcissistic. We are absorbed in ourselves, desiring, seeking something, reduced and seduced by our addictions to the material mass culture comfort zones of "not hearing" and "not seeing." When the poem arises at, or matures into the nondual merging of the first and second stages, the egoic self cannot understand it. Here we long for the intense, the dramatic, the romantic, the beautiful, the conceptual or the ideal. We long for the comfortable but separate self-stimulating "I" of the poem. Egoic touchstone. Here the poem urges us to leave the house and enter in its numinous, transcendent brightness, beyond the trappings of our human sentimental and conceptual *impedimenta*. Here the poem mirrors its bright source behind or ontically prior to the reflected shadowy movement of its objects. Here, knowing subject and object known are not independent. Are not separate. Through the poem, just for a moment, we can be the mirror! Too often we stay in the house.

*The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling, doth glance  
from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven.*

—Wm. Shakespeare

When Rilke understood that his poems lacked the authentic, transcendent "seeing" (*satori, zenkan*) of the images of the objects of the external world, he began his "seeing poems," and lost

much of his following. But the images and poems became transparent, and revealed little pith pictures of their bright source.

In the initial narcissism of the first stage, the poem often omits the object, or the image of the object altogether; or the direct "thing in itself" is lost midway to the intuitive, introspective "I."

*If the senses are called upon only to embody intuition  
about ourselves, they die. They don't want to be  
slaves of our intuition.*

—Robert Bly

*I should be content to look at a mountain for what it  
is, and not a comment on my life.*

—David Ignatow

Thus the "I poem" gives us "news" of the primordial voice of the mind as intuited by the fearful, grasping compensatory egoic structures of the personality-self. The I poem grounds itself in the realm of Narcissus, the ego-I, which is old news insofar as the ego, by definition, has separated itself from the supreme source of the mind—by whatever name— through which it arises. The I poem often reveals this aesthetic ego, the antithesis of participatory self-transcending art. Such art is all too rare.

The human realm is truly interesting only as a part, a participation or an outpicturing of natural things, that profound and ultimate mystery of nature, that luminous empty silence through which nature's appearances arise. The subtle, emotive spontaneous context of the poem itself must intend That (*Tat/Sat*).

*Only that which does not teach, which does not cry  
out, which does not persuade, which does not conde-  
scend, which does not explain, is irresistible.*

—W.B. Yeats.

Such a poem, in contrast to the I poem, is a "mind poem" in that it does not derive from the fear and desire of Narcissus, the ego-I. It does not seek to teach, persuade, enhance or dramatize. It seeks nothing at all. Rather, the mind poem reveals and transmits news of the primordial source of the mind, little pictures of

the great mystery of the essence of the luminous nature of mind that is ontologically interdependent Being Itself (Interbeing) in which or in whom this all arises. The mind poem intends and is grounded in, and facilitates our participation, recognition then realization of *That*. Why? Because that is our actual identity. *That* is who we are.

*Everything is already accomplished. The nature of  
mind is Buddha from the beginning.*

—Garab Dorje

If all nature, everything, is Buddha from the beginning, then the poem is ordinary, "nothing special" (*wu shin*). "The ideas of a poet should be noble and simple" (Tu Fu).

This apparent self that is Narcissus does not live in reality. It dwells in its self-created mythology, the skeptical and alienated *mythos* of the commodified materialist massmind. While the dualistic intelligence of Narcissus identifies and defends the limits of its habitual perceptual, conceptual and belief systems, the mind poem provides an antidote: the "beginners mind" (*shoshin*) the momentary "bracketing" (*epoché*) or placing in abeyance of our constitutive cognitive operations upon reality, such that we may open to receive what reality gives directly, prior to the filtering of it through the atavistic logical and conceptual elaborations and operations of the linear, bivalent, bipolar perceptual and conceptual cognitive structures from which our dualistic languages are derived. "Who are you between two thoughts?" Who is it that shines through the mind and abides at the heart of all beings, forever liberated and fully awake? The mind poem intends *That*.

The mind poem then, may transcend the ego-I, its destructive denial of death, and even the mind itself, referring or pointing back to that presence which is always present (*vidya*), witness to that luminous matrix/base of the mind itself. Here egoic existence and the very essence or nature of mind are a prior unity. And now, at last we can see it, and know it, and be it beyond any doubt. The mind poem intends *That*.



The mind poem may be a poem of images of things, or a poem of ideas, objective or subjective, but it always refers to or intends or notices in some small way, directly, beyond sentiment, concept or belief, through natural things the great mystery that is given nakedly and directly to the mind through the senses and the Heart. This inherent intentionality of the poem does not require or presuppose any epistemology or ontology, or any conceptual structure, elaboration or dilemma whatsoever. It is simply the transconceptual, pristine, direct and subtle witnessing or praising of the self-liberated movement/ energy of this great mystery that is the interdependent, unseparate bright source of mind, precisely at the instant of its arising, and nothing more. It is merely *That*, that is to be experienced and realized through the poem itself.



*Pictures From Cathedral Peak* is a selection of little pictures of that great mystery; little mind poems, and didactic I poems, arising upon the voice of the mind, bright mirror of *That* which abides just prior, *That* which transcends yet embraces it, deep in the silence in whom everything arises.

Cathedral Peak is a great granite spire arising from the California High Sierra, just across the trail from Cathedral Lake—a magical, pristine alpine lake—two day's hike or ski from Yosemite Valley. Cathedral Peak is a place in the mind where this presence of the primordial source of the mind is strong and bright.



for Gaia

my dearest madam  
with your whiterose breasts  
almond eyes afire

here's a belated but earnest plea  
to free your lovers and your poets  
from airy whores of ideality

to work with power and light  
polemic streets and brothels  
of clamorous reality

Narrow is the Gate  
(at Hanakapei Beach)

I'll come here and build a hut  
just upstream below the falls  
alone for a few months.

In sun and cool moon fog  
sit in warm pool and think  
of perfectly nothing

Naked shining in the light  
sing and dance  
perchance to die here.

Chaos of joy  
now sleep in orchids and ginger  
with only the whispering water.

Grace

(at *Puuhonua O Honaunau*  
Place of Refuge, Hawaii)

Day ends in fine misty rain.  
Descended from new mountains  
it deepens fluent black  
lava fingers meeting  
endless salty waves.

Listen.  
Great spirits move now  
in ancient earth.

Here wise men and murderers  
were lifted up together  
just for a moment  
free to move.

Now we  
glad rosy waves  
warm rain on our faces  
receive this peace.

New warriors for earth arise  
arise to meet this  
fearful night.

*Vidya Maya*

Early in the morning  
in predawn darkness we sit  
together enchanted  
in the silence.

In spring we rise up  
brew strong tea. Warm Kona winds  
portend the storm.  
Misty rain glow upon our hut.

In summer the sky is nearly black  
inviolable abyss palpable.  
Wind-driven rain drenches the island.  
Fire in the stove a crucible.

By twilight a watery deluge  
has engulfed the world.  
Our fire rises up  
the roof nearly gone.

In winter all that is  
a fiery maelstrom.  
All that we are  
surrendered to the storm.

Now at dawn burnt ashes.  
Bright moon sets over silvery sea.  
As light fills the world  
we sit together  
enchanted in the silence.

## Returning

Returning late  
from Hanalua Bay.  
I see you  
sleeping in tropical heat  
wet and bright  
in soft moonlight.

I should sit alone  
tonight with that moon  
but press my face  
to your sweet belly.

You awake gently  
urge me inside  
again to earth.

*Cogito*  
(the bridge)

To know “the love which moves  
the sun and stars.”

—Dante Alighieri

i

Hanalua Bay  
beneath feathery Ironwoods  
pulsing white clouds  
that old blue dream  
of tropical sky

Sun and earth  
and endless salty waves  
whorls and eddies in  
eternal wind all celebrate

Infinite mass  
to the light  
and its darkness  
silent creator  
and destroyer of worlds

Celebrate our light ascending  
through warm rain  
descending upon  
this luscious form  
singular body of god



Through thought  
this form intends that one  
prior and perfect ground  
filigree of airy garments  
skyblue body of god

Joy and hurt  
through this form is love  
time-threaded heartstrings  
binding the worlds  
great heart of the body of god

Hanalua Bay  
tonight a little beach fire  
crucible of earth  
so sweet the woodsmoke

*Te Ra Cruciform*

*(Ke Kau O na Kea, Ki'i O akua*  
Cross of Lono, presence of God)

From Haleakala summit  
beyond ancient red cinder cones  
across the Alenuihaha Channel  
horizon Mauna Kea vertical

thrust up from womb of Uri-Isis  
great phallus of Yahweh-Ra-Kane  
praised by Cetaceans and wisemen  
and known to the Sun.

Perfect Mauna Kea in cold wind.  
Tropical snow touches deep blue sky.  
Earth meets heaven  
a cross in the mandala.

Pele  
(at Halemaumau)

Steamy sulfury moonscape  
takes my breath  
becomes soft wind  
rattling bamboo  
in cool rainforest  
above the falls  
where she waits  
in orchids and ginger  
I am now.

Just before dawn  
we sit alone in the bath  
in a gentle rain.  
The Night Blooming Jasmine  
perfumes the warm air.  
My little cats are asleep.  
There is no sound but soft rain.  
Remember the night  
we loved in such joy  
that we couldn't stop crying?

## For People

Ah People!  
Big brains  
big hearts  
small minds  
weak backs

We will not  
be happy  
And like cats  
we don't last

nor do avatars  
nor planets  
nor even stars  
if you think  
about it

Yet we are  
this light

rainbow bridge  
(for Alan Watts)

from love's sorrow  
joy harmony  
confusion escape

utterly through being  
that given now  
swaddled in moonlight

paradox of peace  
clear brightness  
of our laughter

earth spirit  
(after Navajo prayer)

I am  
spirit in earth  
all  
in beauty

earth  
my legs in earth  
all in beauty

earth  
my heart in earth  
all in beauty

rainbow earth  
my mind

now my voice  
in wind and light

all in beauty  
all in light

Only Hit  
(for Roshi)

Attention!  
Gird up your loins.  
We're off to see  
untainted rose of truth.

Fear, unbidden  
not unwelcome  
is the rub  
polishes the tile  
this perfect dance.

"All that can be  
shaken shall be shaken."  
Bright world opening  
only shines  
all the way  
to the end of it.



*MU!*

surrendered utterly  
prior unity that rose  
that all that is  
not this bright face  
in quiet moonlight

Who is it?

Who is it that desires to know  
and to be happy?  
Who is it that is afraid and angry?  
Who is it that is born suffers and dies?  
Who is it that shines through the mind  
and abides at the heart of all beings  
always liberated and fully awake?

the bright

sunface Buddha  
moonface Buddha  
everyone Buddha  
everything Buddha  
one face  
all buddha yes  
so beautiful

Ox Tail

*Tat tvam ami*  
that I am  
zennier than thou  
as categories harden  
stonier than stone  
Maui Merriott Buddha  
cannot hear  
Joshu's dog clapping  
*mu* thru the silence  
Just so  
have a beer

ten thousand waves  
(for Suzuki Roshi)

sit in the bath  
think about time

*sakura sakura*  
sweet koto memory

the more I think  
the sadder I get

*shoshaku jushaku*  
*shin ku myo u*

night rain cool  
upon my head

## Tao

(after Lao Tsu, *Tao Te Ching*, Chapter XXV)

There is that being itself  
Prior to heaven and earth.  
In stillness it abides.  
Ever changeless it is also becoming.  
It is Mother of forms rising.  
It can have no name.  
We may call it God  
But it is only Tao.

Tao continues to infinity  
But is always here.  
In a circle all follow this way.  
We follow earth  
Who follows heaven  
Who follows Tao  
That only being  
That we always are.

Identity

“...and we enter into relation with the light of the gods.”  
—Ta Chuan, *I Ching*

now  
we are  
bright waves  
flowing like the river  
through abundant forest  
coming to meet  
by the lake  
delivered  
in gentle wind  
at peace  
at the still mountain  
in the good earth  
in the crucible of the sun  
in infinite sky  
in that great love  
we are now

## The Secret

(for Ari)

A month before you died  
while reading Lewis Carroll together  
you asked, "What is the true secret?"  
Not knowing I replied "It lies beyond  
our thoughts about it."  
You said "I heard it once  
and I know what it is but  
I'm not supposed to tell."



the river

from deep sleep  
night river rises  
streams *fantasque*  
throughout the dream  
infolded bright  
cascade I flow  
carried away arise  
again forever  
awake.

Is It Just Me  
Or Is It Hot in Here?

In the beginning  
was probably some cool dark  
stochastic little photon  
of ineffable awareness  
in deep silent night.

Sloughed off from god  
knows what and for perhaps  
no purpose at all one  
of the first monads is.

The old Vedas Genesis  
and postmodern metaphysics agree  
the resulting flash and bang  
took until just now to get here.

That's why reality  
moves so fast and every  
thing seems to die.  
A fiery flux chaos  
is an orderly situation.

Bright Spring morning.  
In the wasteland birds sing.  
And here are wildflowers  
And frantic people to love.

Crucible

“We are a sun and a moon  
and a heaven filled with stars”  
—Paracelsus

this light  
in the sun  
is life  
in a cell

is  
fiery galaxies  
burning  
at 3° kelvin

stellar alchemy  
utterly empty  
burns brightly  
as trees and stars

is  
this light  
we are now

## Order

“Certain bounds hold against chaos.”  
—Robert Duncan

Thermodynamically speaking  
time is running out  
will consume us all  
everything utterly devoured.

Order to chaos  
entropy of reality  
nihilistic protocols  
postmodern metaphysics.

In whom  
does this time arise?

## Before Genesis

Before genesis was great peace.  
But now what'll we do?  
In a jiffy, an archetypal Cetacean  
(from a parallel universe) advises:  
"Contemplate the quantum  
emptiness of all That is. Be this  
dizzy spinning fugue rising  
recursive crescendo cascade  
*ex nihilo*. Be  
the fiery pulse of it.  
All that is  
after all only us  
diaphanous body arising  
playing in light  
of the eye of the beholder."

no matter

“...say to the still earth: I flow.  
To the rushing water speak: I am.”  
—Rilke

fractured symmetries  
broken promises  
the quantum dice  
are thrown  
objectivity & causality  
are kaput

yet arising  
the things  
in this light

it takes two  
to tango  
but the crux  
of the matter  
is the singular spin  
of the software  
of mind  
ruddy bright waves  
encoding awareness  
of the paradox of light  
in the particle  
of the form  
of the implicate order  
of the whole

that one  
lives us  
no matter at all

## Hello and Goodbye

Lying here naked  
shining in the great love  
deep inside were scared as hell.

Sweet scent our body  
together our breath  
already consumed  
by grace we have it at all.

Masters say  
surrender each thing  
the moment good or bad  
let it be.

Some sunny day we'll give it up  
sacrifice our effort  
choose to be goodbye  
and hello all the time.

Plucking the Fruit

“Tu souleveras le Rideau  
Et maintenant voila que s’ouvre la fenetre”  
—Apollinaire

“The window opens like an orange  
lovely fruit of light”  
streams like breath  
through this aperture  
to perfect the luscious form.

O lift the veil and taste and touch  
each touch afire  
each orb a sun  
each sun an opening  
like an orange  
lovely fruit of light.



## headpiece

light a light  
to heads of state  
to headshrinks  
to head hunters  
to head trippers  
to dickheads

yes heads everywhere  
mirror Eliot's headpiece  
filled with straw

cerebral gleaners reap  
dark images of perfection  
never enough

so wise up  
and get rational

light a light  
at the crown  
of the head

and the whole body  
shall be full of light

## Gone Beyond

Twenty years ago she said  
“You have the heart of a yogi  
the mind of a philosopher.  
I hope you get it right.”  
Incommensurable paradigms?

Now she's gone. My horses  
gone. My youth gone.  
Most of my self gone  
gone beyond. Yet  
this impetuous brightness.

flow

I cannot hold you beloved  
for even now you're gone  
gently in weeping rain  
somewhere to remember again

Lama Walks with Loma  
(for Rinpoche)

Cold rainy morning sit  
before this wise old face  
a thousand suns  
bright is my face  
all enfolded  
perfect space

Tonight lotus moon sit  
in snowy wind  
weep for hours  
all unfolds  
outshines glad  
Mantra I am now

the circle

endless circle our breath  
days seasons kalpas  
arising ceasing here  
this blue eyed little lupine

the touch  
(for Carol)

through this  
we arise  
from the dream

I am you  
luminous bodies  
yabyum dance

descend  
on our breath

bright river  
arrive forever  
at the heart

## Being Here

In the end the beginning.  
Alpha omega each breath.  
In May bright roses rise  
from deep silent night  
many voices here  
among the stars

In October wistful roses wither  
fall with autumn leaves  
return to empty silent night.  
These colors here  
all the light that  
moves the worlds

we are  
rosy salty waves  
so bright  
luminous ones  
consume the night

great love  
that binds the worlds  
lifts and heals  
we are this light



Sky Dancer  
(for Gabriela)

In this lovely rosette of the mind  
we dance in the delicate clouds.  
Can we be this presence  
that space of sky  
in the bloom of our splendid earth?

## Good Company

Wesak moon tonight  
condone our gentle  
self-congratulations.

This sad face put on  
Narcissus folly  
heart failure  
to be.

Charcot once spoke  
to young Freud  
“See the data  
again and again  
until they themselves  
begin to speak.”

Said Jesus  
“The rest shall be  
added unto you.”

And long before  
“Wonder of wonders  
all beings are Buddha.”

Remembering again  
we laughed and cried  
for we knew  
we had forgotten.

Roots  
(for Kathy)

“The joy we share as we tarry there”  
arises this alchemy of light  
upon dry red dirt at dusk  
on the 7th day outside Jackson.

Kathy and me, with the old folks  
and pea pickers sing “I Am His Own.”  
This our body risen in light  
walks with me then and again  
through the valley  
at the bright water  
at dawn.

## When We Dream

When you laugh in your sleep  
I hear seed syllable  
old mantram AH HA!

When we sang OH AM HA!  
Arising on paleographic wings  
from deepest silent night

When ego and eros  
were just this breath  
arisen from primeval sleep

Now when we dream  
and laugh out loud

## Back Country

The water is cold  
mirrors sun and moon.  
In these new mountains  
live wise old spirits.  
They speak  
through wind in the pines  
if you listen.  
The white clouds  
and little flowers  
will keep you safe

## My Blue Heaven

Long Summer's night  
at Cathedral Peak.  
The day's trials past.

My last log dims  
falling falling sleep.

Ho! Sudden crack!  
Hot sparks upon my feet!

Ha! Awake!  
Yogic fire up the middle  
wondrous leap of worlds.  
Good boy!

O treachery pride.  
Give up that  
and that  
all the way  
to the end of it.

## Nocturne

Bright moon on Bear Creek Spire.  
Late October snow covers my tent.  
The wind blowing down from Morgan Pass  
is cold. Smells clean like winter.

Next month the lakes will freeze.  
Then I'll ski the bowls above Dade Lake.  
Tonight this presence is strong  
and bright in my heart.

## The Teaching

Autumn snow on Cathedral Peak.  
But I miss gigantic sweet cherries  
we ate last summer.

My fire is warm.  
Then the ashes.  
There is nothing at all  
that I know.

These old mountains.  
Listen. Wind and water  
rive primeval granite.

There is nothing at all  
that I am. Now wet  
new snow upon my face.



## Abundance

Cold October dawn.  
Alpenglo on Cathedral Peak.  
Three day's rations  
now in the bellies  
of an old sow  
and her cub.  
My breakfast  
water and chocolate bars.  
We laugh together  
in abundant earth.  
In whom does this all arise?

## Autumn Wind

October again.  
Smell it in the wind?  
Thin mountain air  
makes me see stars.  
Icy water numbs my hands.  
My hut flooded with Autumn sun.

Evening alpenglow  
on Bear Creek Spire  
and new snow.  
Early winter in the  
high meadows.  
Deer and bear prepare.

For a billion Autumns  
these great mountains  
arise and fall in this  
eternal wind  
breath of one  
who holds this all  
gently in the hands.

Christmas Eve Blizzard

(for Linda)

Two days whiteout  
near Mammoth Pass.  
White wind  
High Sierra sings  
“Cast out our sin  
and enter in”  
this old carol rings  
a touchstone.

God is metaphor  
yes is love  
light of the world  
breath of many voices  
deep within us  
speak and enter in  
now when we listen  
to the wind.

New Snow

(after Osarqaq, Inuit poet)

Wondrous to see  
these old mountains  
fill with new snow.

Great Earth infinity.  
Her seasons  
lift me upward  
fill me with joy.

These old mountains.  
The pure whiteness.  
Wondrous to be.  
*Yai ya yaia!*

## Denali

Pale old winter sun  
over Denali.  
Soft redgold shades  
early evening alpenglo.  
The white wind is still.

From a great height  
bears and wolves  
rule this earth.  
Aperture.  
Just for a moment  
perfect peace.

An Old Hunter  
(for Dersu Uzala)

Sun and Moon are powerful men.  
If one of them dies  
all beings will die.

Wind and water and fire  
are old men and powerful too.  
In fire the forest is reborn.  
Wind and water give us life.

In my fire tonight I see long ago  
my home and garden in spring  
all in blossoms and light.

Now I am old  
and my wife is gone.  
But we will meet again.

Winter is here.  
Soon I will be  
buried in new snow.

whiteout

cathedral peak  
white days alone  
and cold black nights

thin air  
mind at the margin

now  
I am that  
pure white

I am  
here  
at dawn  
all the color  
in the light  
that fills the world

## Generation

Ancient Thule people  
traveled 3000 Arctic miles  
in supple skin boats  
still hunt whales in icy seas  
sing in smoky twilight  
about love beneath this  
pale old sun  
who never sets



Climax  
(for Lou Welch)

Ancient granite  
primeval ice  
eternal wind  
do you know  
vast boreal forests  
as they rise and fall  
in your infinite seasons?

## As To Polo

500 years before Jesus  
Cyrus and young Darius  
used our human heads  
less brain case contents  
as polo balls.

One wonders how  
given that obliquity  
peculiar to our Homo skull  
one would ever hit  
the bloody thing straight!

## No Matter At All

One snow-flurried night  
in Lone Pine  
I stopped by a sleepy  
cattle truck to talk  
with a beefy Hereford.

Felling guilty  
I said "I'm sorry pal."  
His eyes blazed  
electric blue  
and spoke

"No matter  
we are food together  
all consumed  
no matter at all."

guru

from time to time  
these precious old beings  
blow your mind  
utterly demolish all  
reasonable strategies  
who you are gone  
threadbare reticulum sit  
by grace if you're lucky  
bright mirror that you  
from time to time

## Many Voices

In the East  
Summer moon rises full  
over Sandia Crest

Pale horse  
cock crows  
dogs bark

Sundown colors dance  
through earthy air  
and rain

These many voices  
whole body  
full of light

Nothing Absent  
(for Adi Da Samraj)

Midnight.  
April rain.  
Solace of rain.  
Peacock's cry away off.  
"What is absent from your happiness?"  
haunts me. *Tat Tvam Asi.*  
Eternal mystery That  
"flower absent from all bouquets"  
already present forgotten  
to remember again.

5:00 A.M. Again the dawn.  
Thunder from Sandia Crest.  
Wet Juniper in the wind.  
"Submit Now To Be That!"  
Be that one always  
perfectly obvious  
I Am. *Tat Tvam Ami.*  
*Tam Aham Bajami.*  
"God cannot possibly be hidden."  
Nothing absent  
from our happiness.

*nyingpo*

give up again  
a dream abright  
along a rosy way  
to give our heart  
away asleep awhile

it is as  
if we all  
were not at all  
that one left out  
in rain a rose  
arise a song

from deepest downy  
spacious heart  
awake I dreamed  
primeval dream  
O heart enwombed  
receive a one

from whom all  
roses open are  
I am again

## *Shunyata*

The crux of the matter.  
More stable than mountains  
it abides at the heart of everything.  
Through love and time it waits  
in silence at the margin  
beckons us across  
to the shadow realm  
aperture  
to our source.



thank you  
(for Beth)

from above  
earth receives  
sun and wind

gives me breath  
fills my spaces  
with light

opens me  
to receive  
who you are

I give you  
poems and  
a red rose

## Voice

(for Russell Paul Schofield)

Listen to the wind, and the twittering death  
at the bottom and the top of each breath.  
Open this burning door each now enter in  
a secret place that deep  
sweet dream of sleep wherein  
we are a bell ringing the end  
again and again in bright silent night.

Listen to the wind, and the twittering death  
as the sun rises and sets upon the brushwork of our lives  
this silk itself embedded in lovely rosette of the mind.  
Open this burning door enter in dark house of the moon.  
Here embrace the monstrous shadow spread upon the face  
of all that is. For there is no other. *Vani, Tat tvam ami.*  
This great wind sweeps us across the deep night.

Listen to the wind, and the twittering death  
within this breath of all that forms and moves  
fugue of roses and butterflies cascades and falls  
like falling stars broken symmetries we are risen  
each breath angelus of light to meet that fearful night.  
Thus do we enter in and shine ever at the Heart  
when we listen to the wind.

Tulips  
(for Paul Boyd Boaz)

Tulips in old Mimi's garden.  
Many colors. "Blessings" she called them  
round our lives. In spring fill us up.  
In Winter too when we will not receive.  
"By Grace" she said  
"We shall have our tulips."

Horseshit she threw upon the little bulbs.  
It smelled like dirt. Like earth.  
Like earthworms in a can. *Oligocheata*  
who turn the sweet humus for us.  
All of it carbon from the stars  
stainless ground of all that is.

After the rain when the air was sweet  
with earth those worms would copulate  
hermaphroditically  
under the old rose trellis.  
"See that!" said old Paul laughing.  
"They're stuck on each other  
and that's what gives us the corn  
and the trees. You've got one  
of them in your pants right now!"

That seed in me.  
Flesh water breath. Stardust actually.  
Seed planted here goes on  
through small pelvises and big brains.  
Sweet nipples give the calories. Goes on  
in horses and worms. In perfect spring tulips.  
All these many colors  
here among the stars.

*puja*  
(for Carol)

jasmine and quiet rain  
embrace us  
sweet earth our body  
together

self portrait

amateur mystic  
macho mind warrior  
interdimensional dilettante  
and gourmand  
of cosmic stuff  
always here  
in love  
with earth

## Self Portrait

Middling old yogi  
amateur philosopher  
not much of a poet

May I just be  
for someone  
a dear friend

## Consummation

Gentle cooking for heaven in earth  
the *samadhi* of the *Anschuung*

(for Salvador Dali)

Alchemically speaking  
we must eat  
all that given.

Mythtime fruits and pits  
edible grist these  
"atavistic vestiges"  
linear sins of generations

form a crutch that is a cross  
bright imprint endlessly  
upon the whole old cabal  
"delirious reality" itself.

Earthtime roses and flies consumed  
fiery crucible of desire  
distills Proustian egg divine  
womblike citadel of mind

descends vortically lifts  
our vernal earth from time  
her nubile hypercubic gooseflesh  
ripe greeny fig opened by the sun.

And the pits pricey pearls  
philosopher's stones  
devoutly wished essence  
these sins in earth  
little sweets of heaven.

## Vertigo

In the first grade old Miss Gibson screamed  
“You’re stupid!, stupid!” when I froze up  
in the reading circle. Screamed “Stupid!”  
at me. Later I joined Mensa  
taught philosophy got a guru.

This fear is a circle. Aches in my back.  
Spins on and on in the head.  
Spinning meatwheel vertigo smells  
like cotton candy. Old Burgundy. Ripe  
strawberries in summer when you remember.

In every dimension a line becomes a circle  
wistful silence whispering the end.  
Some kind of brightness binds us us together in it.  
Curious order spins on and on.

Trees and biomass keep us safe  
from solar radiation. Give each one  
time to attend to opening.  
Some sunny day perhaps today  
we will all shine with it.



“It Ain’t No Big Deal”

(for Patrick and Jerry)

“All of this, yet to die.”  
All of this gone  
gone utterly beyond.  
Before the light  
primordial darkness  
perfect womb  
of all that is. Yes  
return to the light  
and its liberating darkness.  
Now return again awake  
and heal unbroken  
perfect worlds.

*Stromata*

(Quartet in A Minor)

In the end the beginning.  
Alpha Omega the cycles.  
Fragments of the whole.  
Our hope in a minor key.

In Autumn's drizzle  
wet roses wither.  
Brief antidote given through the light  
emblem of our starry root  
specter of the coming night.

Clamorous reality binds  
us to the wheel.  
Yet at the heart  
this impetuous brightness.

Flooded with Spring  
glad tulips arise.  
*"Verde que te quiero verde."*  
Cycles and pauses filled  
with nothing but space.

Arising herein  
a garden of light.  
O wonder of wonders  
all beings delight!

## Notice to Quit

Now is the time  
to quit trying  
to be

As it is  
already liberated  
now is the time  
to give up

As it is  
already present  
now is the time  
to enter in

Perfect as it is  
now is the time  
to be

## Genes

“Yesterday’s buds are today’s blossoms  
which we draw with a brush on silk.”

—Lu Chi

Eternal totems vortical descend  
through voice of sky  
penetrate abrosial womb  
imprint the dazzling form.

Mythtime messengers alive  
bear seeds of our salvation lightly  
on *Lepidoptera* wings encode  
the sacred carbon.

In salt and blood  
these earth elements  
burn brightly  
with trees and stars.

Mute music of tomorrow  
in fiery seeds from above  
deep within us.

For Coyote  
(for Gary Snyder)

I know you Coyote.  
You eat my cats  
and the rabbits  
even skunks!  
Everything!  
Eat it all up!

Great earth consumed.  
Only you sly coyote  
survive this chaos  
as we cycle together  
celebrate your song

tonight  
to the moon  
tomorrow the dawn  
to laughing earth  
to luminous sun  
to wondrous stars  
all forever Coyote.

## Breath

Summer moon rises  
full over the Panamints.

Warm desert wind  
whisper of wind.

In the distance  
heat lightning  
brightens  
redgold shadow peaks.

Flow up still earth  
arise to meet  
the perfect night.

Here soar  
off the edge  
deep blue space.

Sweet wet sage  
in the wind.  
Breathe it in.

I am lived  
everywhere  
at once.